

Courtyard at Jamestown

Don't look at it as a Retirement Home.
Pretend your parents sent you off
to a boarding school and you've been assigned
the task of squeezing out life stories
from every person you meet —from the
grumpy old lady lying on her bed in room 27
to the burley gentleman who clunks his wooden leg
and likes to play Pinocle. You know,
the one who sits across from you at breakfast,
who told you how pretty you were.
Okay, so he might have been putting
the make on you, but that's all right.
Chalk it up to experience.

You say you don't like
anything about the experience...
no matter *how* you look at it?
Well, boarding school
does take some getting used to.
In the beginning *everyone* feels scared.

See that white haired lady over there?
Sally Moreno. She used to be a disco dancer,
but had to give it up when arthritics
hit her hips. Of course, she's 85 now.

In the corner sits Henry Robison. Did you know
he was a long distance runner before
going into electrical engineering. His wife
wrote a newspaper column up until the day she died.
He still sleeps on her pillow at night.

Jennifer Kilpatrick is someone else
you'd like to meet. She does oil paintings when
she gets enough paints. Her daughter brings the stuff
whenever she's in town. She resides in Vegas.

So there you are. It's as simple as fishing.
Draw out people's stories and you'll soon find
people's stories draw out you. Go for it!

—Bonnie Stucki Gundmundson 2005
(From one loving sister to another)